

MEDIA TIPS

INTRODUCTION:

Promoting your event through the media is an effective way of raising awareness and a great opportunity for carers to meet people in a similar situation, share their experiences and find out more about what support is available to them.

The media covers all forms of newspapers, radio and television. Each one has a different way of conducting interviews and it can be useful to know what to expect from each.

This media tip sheet is intended to help you understand the process of telling the media about your event and give you the confidence to handle the different types of media interviews.

FIRST CONTACT:

Newspapers

After sending out your press release about your event, the reporter from your local newspaper may ring you. They may like to conduct an interview over the phone straight away. They may also want to arrange a time for a photographer to come down to your event and take pictures.

Radio

Like newspapers, radio interviews can be conducted over the phone or face-to-face. Radio interviews also fall into two categories; 'live' or 'pre-recorded'. When the reporter first rings you it is useful to ask whether the interview will be live on air or pre-recorded and broadcast at a later time or date. You should also ask whether it will be on the phone or in the studio.

Television

When the reporter first calls you it will be to arrange a time to come to your event. Television interviews can also be 'live' or 'pre-recorded' but they are usually pre-recorded and then edited before broadcast. As well as the interview you may be asked to be filmed carrying out seemingly ordinary tasks such as making a cup of tea. This is to help the reporter illustrate the story and you may need to set aside an hour or so if this is what is required. If you do not want to do what the reporter suggests, feel free to suggest another activity.

PREPARATION:

Good preparation is key to a confident interview and will help ease any apprehensions you may have. As well as preparing yourself you can ask the reporter a number of questions to ensure that you understand what is required:

- If it is a broadcast interview (radio or television) remember to ask if it is live or pre-recorded.

- For radio or television ask if it will be for news, which usually requires a short 30 second sentence, or for a programme, which tend to use longer interviews.
- Television reporters may ask if they can film you at your event. It's important to manage the TV crew as some people may not want to be filmed at the event set clear guidelines for what is and isn't possible. If you are working in a hospital setting you will need to let your hospital press department be aware of what's going on.
- It is OK to ask what type of questions you can expect. You are not there to be 'tripped up' and if you are prepared it will lead to a better interview for everyone involved.
- If you would like a Macmillan representative to be with you for a televised interview please let your Macmillan contact know. We will endeavour to support you as much as we can but it will not always be possible.
- You can ask to have a copy of the finished film, feature or interview. Sometimes this can be arranged but on other occasions it may not be possible.

Once you know what to expect from the media you can then concentrate on what you would like to say.

1. Think about:

- Use your press release to familiarise your self with the background story.
- What are your three key points that you want to get across in an interview? These points need to be concise and well focused. You should plan to get the most important idea across at the beginning of the interview.
- Some facts, figures or examples you can use our fact sheet to help you with this.

KEY MESSAGES:

The purpose of a key message or key point is to communicate a specific and important piece of information that is relevant to Macmillan Cancer Support and/or the subject.

A key message should be supported by the following:

- Examples – what this means in 'people terms'. You could refer to a carer's story to help paint the picture however please ensure you have their permission to do this
- Statistics – that illustrate the examples and key points.

For example:

Key message:

For Carers Rights Day, we're reminding carers they are not alone and can turn to Macmillan Cancer Support for information about financial help and their employment rights.

Statistics:

We know that there are currently two million people living with a cancer diagnosis, if the current rate continues; the number will have doubled to four million people by 2030. This has resulted in a growing number of people who care for someone with cancer.

In 'people' terms:

For cancer support at home, over the phone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on 0808 808 00 00 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 8pm) or visit www.macmillan.org.uk/carers

2. Remember:

- Take deep breaths if you feel nervous, this will help you relax and focus.
- Avoid a dry throat by having some water to hand if possible
- This interview is an opportunity to promote Macmillan Cancer Support, so plan to enjoy it.

DEALING WITH TRICKY QUESTIONS

Sometimes, through ignorance of the subject or pressure from their editor, a journalist may ask questions you find difficult to answer from a personal point of view or because it touches on Macmillan's own view point. Remember you are not a Macmillan spokesperson and there are no expectations on you to comment on policy or issues not related to your story.

There are a number of ways of dealing with this situation:

- For pre-recorded interviews that will be edited before they are broadcast, you may wish to explain politely that you are not prepared to answer their question and explain why.
- If the question relates to Macmillan policy you can ask them to refer to your Macmillan contact for the answer.
- During live interviews it is more difficult but there are useful phrases that you can use to deflect the question and help you return to the issue you want to talk about. Here are some examples:

“Some people may think that e the real issue is”

“All I can talk about is from my own personal experiences which...”

“I am not here to talk about that but from my experiences...”

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Be yourself.
- Try to sound confident and friendly.
- Use simple, conversational language. Avoid jargon or, if you must use it, explain it.
- Be brief and to the point, your time is limited, but don't rush or talk faster to get everything in, aim to speak clearly and concisely and think about the tone of your voice.
- Do not get side-tracked by questions which do not fit into your key points – if you stay in control you can move the interview back to what you want to say.
- Say what you have to say (remember your three key messages) and then stop – it is the job of the interviewer to keep the interview moving.

- If the interviewer gives wrong information, you must correct it straight away, otherwise it will seem that you agree.
- If you cannot comment, explain why (e.g. 'I should not pre-empt the report', 'I am not a health professional and cannot comment on that specifically, however....').
- Mention the name of Macmillan Cancer Support as early in the interview as you can and do not assume the interviewer knows anything about you or Macmillan.
- If the interview is pre-recorded do say if you want to repeat or correct and answer.
- Listen – for opportunities, inaccuracies, meanings.

If you'd like any help with gaining media coverage, please contact your regional Macmillan communications team. Their contact details are as follows:

Scotland and Northern Ireland

Michelle Gallacher, Senior Communications officer for Scotland and Northern Ireland
0131 260 3720/ 07812 675 839 email: mgallacher@macmillan.org.uk

Wales

Becky Land, Communications Officer for Wales
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London, Anglia and South East region

Bernadette Mooney, Regional Communications Officer
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